

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

October 13, 1999
MAG Office - Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Mayor Sam Campana, Scottsdale, Acting
Chairman
Mayor Cynthia Dunham, Gilbert
Mayor Elaine Scruggs, Glendale
Mayor Bill Arnold, Goodyear
Supervisor Don Stapley for Supervisor Jan
Brewer, Maricopa County

Councilmember Keno Hawker for Mayor
Wayne Brown, Mesa
Mayor Skip Rimsza, Phoenix
Roc Arnett, State Transportation Board
* Mayor Adolfo Gamez, Tolleson

*Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Eric Anderson, MAG
Paul Berumen, Phoenix
James M. Bourey, MAG
Peggy Carpenter, Scottsdale
Valerie Day, MAG
Chuck Eaton, ADOT
Joe Galli, Maricopa County
Jim Huling, Tempe
Terry Johnson, MAG

Steven Methvin, Glendale
Norris Nordvold, Phoenix
Tami Ryall, Gilbert
Dennis Smith, MAG
Lisa Takata, Phoenix
Gordon Tyus, MAG
Paul Ward, MAG
Jerene Watson, Goodyear

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman Sam Campana at 9:15 a.m.

2. Approval of July 14, 1999 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Bill Arnold moved, Mayor Skip Rimsza seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the July 14, 1999 Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee meeting.

3. Update on Transportation Funding Estimate

James M. Bourey explained the process developed for allocation of transportation funding. After a meeting of Arizona transportation officials in April 1999, the Resource Allocation Advisory Committee (RAAC) was formed. He said that representatives from MPOs, COGs, and the State Department of Transportation comprise the RAAC. After a number of meetings, Mr. Bourey stated that in 1998, the MAG region received 10.5 percent of state and federal ADOT discretionary funds. After the fair share analysis, it was determined that for dollar in, dollar out, the region should receive 38 percent. Mr. Bourey stated that ADOT proposed 17.3 percent last year and MAG proposed 24.1 percent. He stated that significant progress has been made in adjusting the funding received and expressed appreciation for

the cooperative efforts of ADOT staff. Mr. Bourey stated that the COGs and MPOs are working cooperatively to arrive at a fair agreement. He noted that 37 percent is the ultimate goal for our region. Mr. Bourey indicated that could not be accomplished quickly, and over the next five years, our region will receive 28 percent of the funding. He explained that to arrive at that point, the region needs 39 percent this year to catch up. Mr. Bourey stated that if additional funds should become available, it is anticipated that MAG and PAG would share the funds.

Mayor Rimsza asked if the 28 percent is a blended total of all five years. Mr. Bourey replied that it was. He indicated that additional money may be coming in. He referred to the handout of the RAAC recommended resource allocation for the FY 2001-2005 Transportation Program. Mr. Bourey commented that we are at the limit of what we can hope to achieve for this year. Mayor Rimsza asked for specifics to be noted in the handout. Mr. Bourey referred to the table on page 4 that shows FY 2005 allocation of discretionary funds and total FY 2001-2005 program. He indicated that the rural counties are allocated to receive almost half of the discretionary funds.

Councilmember Keno Hawker asked if the allocations would be discussed again next year. Mr. Bourey replied that they would. Councilmember Hawker asked if changes in population and goals would affect the ultimate goal. Mr. Bourey replied that the goals would be re-evaluated as needed. He noted that the statewide Long Range Transportation Plan provides guidance on the allocations.

Acting Chairman Campana asked if a recommendation from the Subcommittee was needed. Mr. Bourey replied that this agenda item was being presented for information only. He remarked that the result of the presentation was to inform and involve the Subcommittee in the early stages and receive input and comments from the members at the outset.

Dennis Smith noted that the rural share is important. He stated that comments had been received at the League conference in regard to the rural areas. Mr. Smith noted that there is much misinformation regarding the rural communities being treated unfairly. He indicated that the percentage of allocation they are getting shows they are being treated fairly. Mayor Rimsza commented on the good quality roads in the rural areas. Acting Chairman Campana asked if the rural communities received the RAAC allocation information. Mr. Smith replied he did not know if this information had been distributed at the Governor's Economic Development Conference.

4. Construction of Median Cable Barriers on the MAG Freeway System

Terry Johnson stated that Governor Hull requested that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) revisit the design guidelines for median barriers, due to recent cross over accidents on Valley freeways. Mr. Johnson noted that the MAG freeway system was designed primarily to have a 46-foot median width for which a median barrier is considered optional according to design standards. An ADOT team has reviewed the state-of-practice for placement of median barriers on urban freeways. This included a review of traffic and crash data in other states and has resulted in a Draft Median Barrier Guideline for Urban Freeways. This guideline recommends barriers on medians less than 75 feet in width. According to this recommendation median barriers are required on all existing and planned urban freeways in the region. The guideline also recommends the use of cable median barriers as the most cost effective barrier. Mr. Johnson stated that federal Hazard Elimination Safety funds will be used for retrofitting all existing freeways with cable median barriers. It is proposed that MAG fund installation of median cable barriers on all new freeways, including freeways under construction.

Mayor Rimsza commented that the construction of cable median barriers is a sound business decision. He mentioned that the City of Phoenix recently settled \$7.5 million in lawsuits resulting from cross over accidents. Mayor Rimsza stated that the liability exceeds the capital costs of installing the barriers. He expressed satisfaction that the barriers would be funded. Mayor Rimsza mentioned that less landscaping would be needed after barrier installation, resulting in lower landscaping costs.

Mayor Elaine Scruggs expressed concern that one cable design solution could be applied to all freeways. Mayor Rimsza stated that different types of cable barriers are available depending on the road structure. He stated that the design engineers are studying the circumstances and are designing the most appropriate and safe barriers. He indicated that some segments may require concrete to supplement the cable. Mayor Rimsza commented that the engineers are proceeding very carefully and this takes time.

Mayor Arnold asked about limiting the boundary of the cable median installation to east of Dysart Road. He commented that the far west Valley is fast growing and this area will soon be highly populated. Chuck Eaton from ADOT replied that narrower medians are found in urban freeways, whereas medians are wider in rural sections. He indicated that if the median is narrowed due to widening of the freeway, protection by barriers would be reconsidered.

Mayor Rimsza commented that the recovery time issue was an issue considered. He commented that the ability of a driver to recover control would be lost after entering the median and striking a barrier.

Roc Arnett commented on the complicated process of installing median barriers. He stated that cable barriers are more forgiving than concrete barriers. Mr. Arnett stated that it is a lengthy process to determine the right type of barrier.

Mayor Scruggs expressed concern with the possibility of a 'slingshot' effect of a car hitting a cable barrier and deflecting back into traffic. Mayor Rimsza commented that cable barriers are designed to absorb the energy of a collision.

Acting Chairman Campana asked if there were any additional questions. She thanked Mr. Johnson for his presentation. Acting Chairman Campana stated that this agenda item was for a recommendation and asked for a motion.

Supervisor Stapley moved, Mayor Dunham seconded, and it was unanimously carried to recommend approval to: 1. Fund median cable barriers on new freeways (including new freeways under construction) with MAG freeway funds; 2. Fund median cable barriers on all existing freeways with ADOT Hazard Elimination Safety funds; 3. Amend the FY 2000-2004 MAG Transportation Improvement Program to include the following median cable barrier projects in FY 2000 with ADOT Hazard Elimination Safety funding: (i) Agua Fria from Northern Avenue to I-17, (\$2.75 million); (ii) I-10 from Dysart Road to Stack (I-17) & 7th Street to I-17, (\$2.79 million); (iii) Pima Freeway from Shea Blvd. To Salt River, (\$1.81 million); (iv) Price Freeway from Loop 202 to Guadalupe Road, (\$0.76 million); (v) Red Mountain from Loop 101 to Country Club Road, (\$0.67 million); (vi) Squaw Peak Freeway from Glendale Avenue to Bell Road, (\$1.34 million); (vii) Superstition Freeway from Signal Butte Road to Mountain View Road, (\$1.00 million); and 4. Encourage ADOT to provide for the maximum landscaping feasible.

5. Discussion of Assumptions for the Development of the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Bourey stated that new challenges in planning assumptions need to be addressed now that the acceleration of the MAG freeway system is underway. He indicated that if planning assumptions are made at the policy level, led by the involvement of the Regional Council at the outset, this would be useful in developing future plans in air quality, mobility, and transit. Mr. Bourey noted that the Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force would be making recommendations in a year to the Legislature regarding future transportation funding. Mr. Bourey handed out a map showing the population potential that could be accommodated within the planned MAG freeway system. He explained the buffer zones on the map and how the projected population of the region could be accommodated within 6 miles of the freeway system until the year 2020.

Mr. Johnson stated that policy guidance is needed to update the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan. He said that early input and direction from the Regional Council is needed in providing this guidance. Mr. Johnson gave a presentation that showed slides of population growth, passenger miles of travel, future travel conditions, and peak period congestion throughout the region. He displayed a chart of the common transportation policy themes, such as multimodalism, safety, environmental, and funding, of peer region Councils of Governments. Mr. Johnson stated that the transportation policies need to be updated because they are outdated, Valley Vision 2025 goals have been drafted, incremental plans need policy direction, the freeway plan is being completed, land use plans need to be integrated with transportation, new funding initiatives are anticipated, and the Long Range Plan needs to be updated. Mr. Johnson handed out a report on the goals, objectives and strategies of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for the Subcommittee's information.

Mayor Rimsza stated that the transit component needs to be addressed. He stated that if local elections for transit tax do not pass, requests for statewide funding will need to be made. Mayor Rimsza stated that 20 percent should be set aside even if the elections pass. He commented that some communities do not have a large sales tax base to support transit service, which is expensive. Mayor Rimsza stated that transit should be kept in the plan and funding sources need to be identified.

Mayor Scruggs asked if the Subcommittee's goal is to develop assumptions so they could be presented to the Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force. Mr. Bourey replied that input from the Mayors would be used in the development of the plan. Mayor Scruggs commented that it appears that transportation has been planned on the assumption that if growth is not planned, it will not happen, rather than the realization that growth is inevitable and planning for it.

Mayor Arnold stated that one way streets could be a solution. He stated that rapid rail, rather than surface rail, should be studied to help commuters from outlying areas. Mayor Arnold stated that all communities need to participate in funding.

Mr. Smith stated that fundamental decisions need to be made. The path is defined by policy makers. Mr. Smith stated that decisions made could affect many other issues, such as open space. He commented that the 1960 plan, now complete, gave us guidance, but a new plan is now needed.

Councilmember Hawker stated that growth initiatives will set the stage for upcoming decisions. He commented that plans will have to be integrated to avoid sprawl. Councilmember Hawker encouraged a long term examination of the outer loop to plan for right of way acquisition. He commented that the majority of freeway cost is right of way cost. Councilmember Hawker stated that high density transit corridors could be established to give citizens an option to live in the corridor and use transit.

Councilmember Hawker stated that levying fees for peak hour use of freeways, as done in San Diego, could be examined.

Mayor Dunham stated that planning for future right of way acquisition to save money does not solve the immediate problems, such as those experienced by her community as a result of explosive growth.

Mayor Scruggs stated that choice of transportation for citizens is important. Mayor Scruggs stated that some bus routes are always full and some are hardly used. She stated that optimizing popular transit corridors would allow transit dollars to go farther.

Mr. Arnett stated that the State Transportation Board is anxious to see the results of the Task Force's recommendations. He stated that it is essential that the Valley coordinate transportation, especially multi-modal transportation. Mr. Arnett stated that it is important to have a regional plan that will take us into the next century. He stated that the Valley Vision 2025 Transportation Subcommittee discussed the Valley View Parkway, which would circle the outer Valley. Mr. Arnett stated that the Red Letter process helps the transportation plan move along. He stated that bus pullouts need to be designed for all streets. Mr. Arnett stated that questions on transit were presented at a recent public hearing at the Anthem community. He mentioned the possibility that developers could be requested to include rideshare plans for their residents.

Acting Chairman Campana stated that federal guidelines need to be examined to implement infill projects. She commented that these projects could impact air quality conformity and driving patterns.

Supervisor Stapley commented that the major cost to transportation is right of way. He stated that creative ways to look at using right of way be examined. He indicated that new standards for these right of ways may be needed. Supervisor Stapley commented that money should be allocated where it is needed.

Mr. Bourey stated that input and comments from the Subcommittee is valuable. He indicated that comments on urban core areas are important. Mr. Bourey commented that policy direction on many issues is needed, both on the annual plan and the 20-year perspective.

Mayor Rimsza stated that commuting problems causes businesses to move outward, rather than having the effect of citizens moving inward toward jobs. He expressed concern with the cost of an outer loop. Mayor Rimsza stated that immediate needs need to be balanced with the potential savings on right of way.

Mr. Smith commented on the safety issues that will come with the aging of baby boomer drivers 15 years from now. Mayor Rimsza stated that, at that time, a good transit system will become invaluable.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Chairman

Secretary